



# Developing Next Level Grit for Lifelong Resilience

How to optimize your brain's operating system for performance longevity.

fearless! *One Woman*  
women's summit ottawa

# Building Resilience

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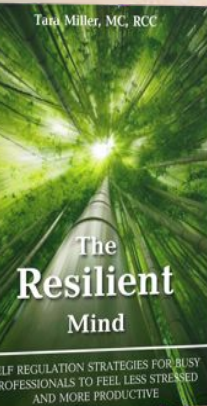


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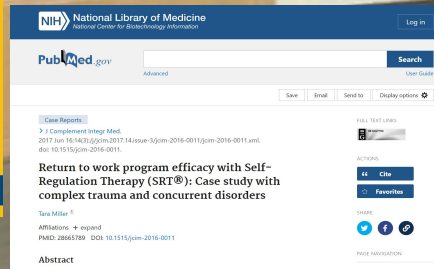


## DEFIANT

DEVELOPING NEXT  
LEVEL GRIT FOR  
LIFELONG  
RESILIENCE



TARA MILLER



I teach high achievers how to master their nervous systems so that they can be:

- More in control
- Less reactive
- More strategic
- More efficient
- More focused
- More impactful
- Healthier
- Better team builders
- Better communicators







# Defining Resilience

Classic definition is: the ability to bounce back

The ability to encounter stressors, respond, and recover.

It is an innate human trait... but it also can be grown and trained.

Though self care is important, resilience is built through resistance.

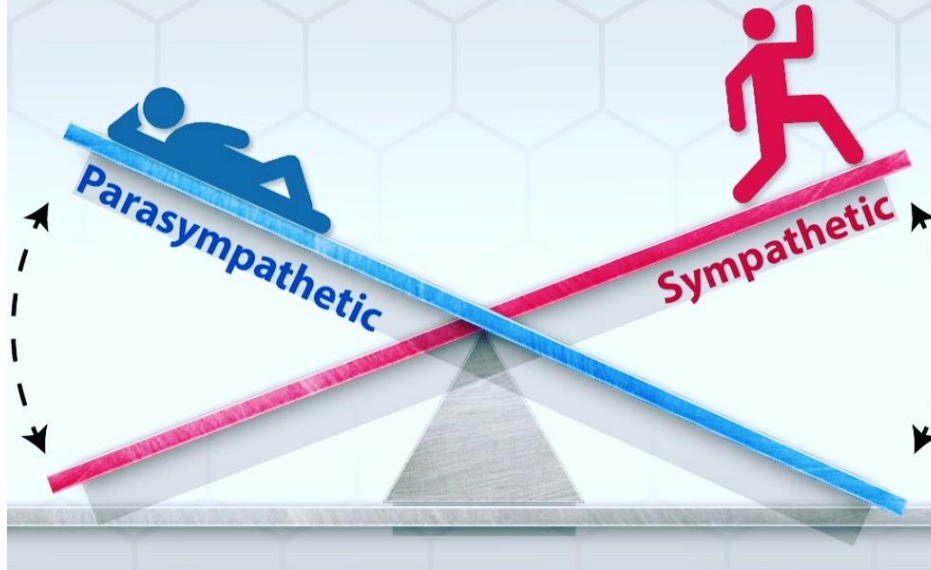
You become resilient through how you maneuver through adversity. And how you implement recovery.

# Resilience is built in the nervous system

- Your resilience is determined by the health of your nervous system and how full your container is.
- The nervous system is your automatic survival system that responds in a flow of sympathetic arousal and parasympathetic response for survival and recovery always seeking to find and maintain a neutral baseline (homeostasis)



Homeostasis is a dynamic balance between the autonomic branches.



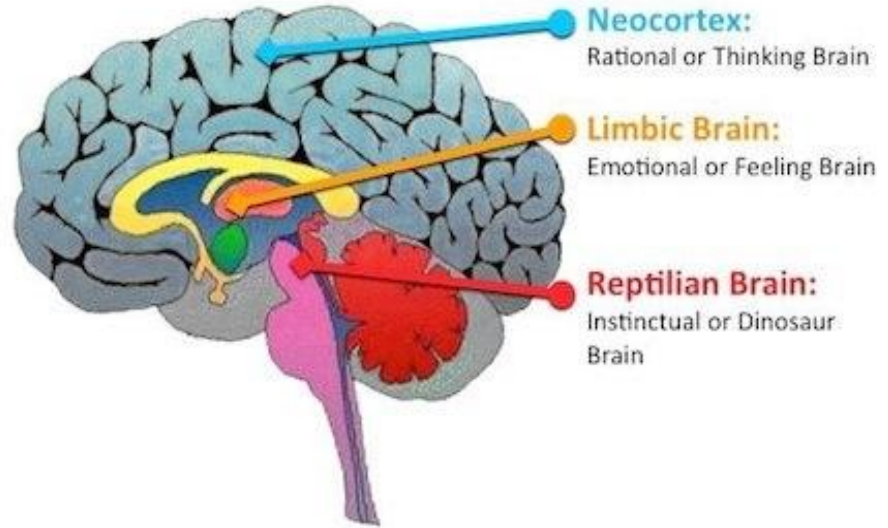
**Rest-and-digest:**  
Parasympathetic  
activity dominates.

**Fight-or-flight:**  
Sympathetic activity  
dominates

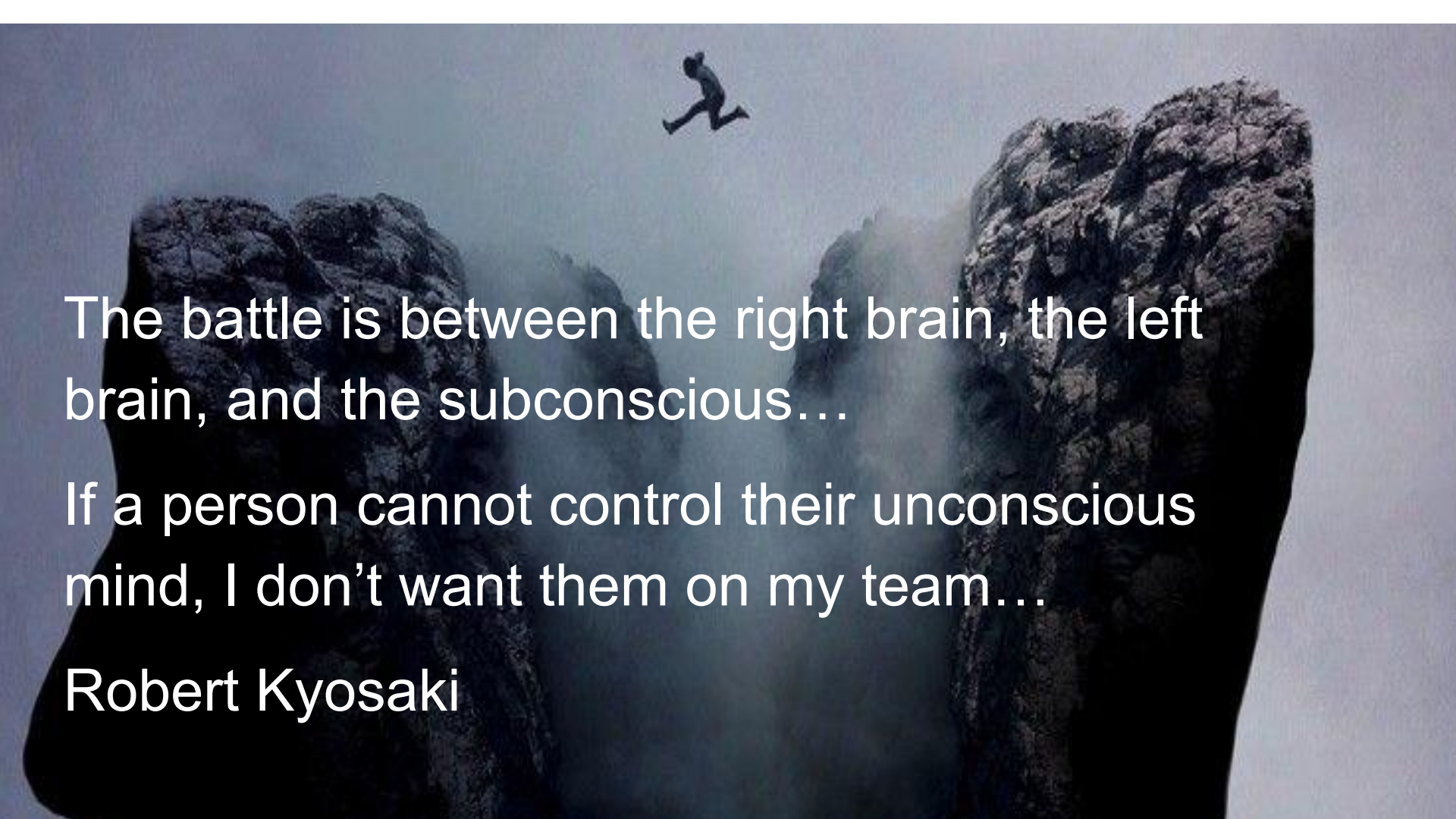
# The myth buster of resilience...

Our conscious mind is the last to get the information so when we talk about our stress or focus on our emotions, we're missing the root cause.

Our nervous system health and resiliency is built from our primal brain / reptilian brain through our nervous system.





A person is captured mid-jump, leaping from a dark, craggy rock formation on the left towards another similar formation on the right. The person is a small silhouette against a pale, overcast sky. The rock formations are dark and textured, with some vegetation visible on the right-hand rock. The overall scene conveys a sense of risk and challenge.

The battle is between the right brain, the left brain, and the subconscious...

If a person cannot control their unconscious mind, I don't want them on my team...

Robert Kyosaki

Your nervous system is your operating system.  
Every other program you run on top of it is influenced by how  
well it is functioning and optimized.



Optimizing your operating system helps you avoid symptom chasing: thoughts, emotions, and behaviors and trying to control them without actually changing the root cause.

The more out of control a person feels on the inside the more they try to control their external environment and other people.





Resiliency from the nervous system up gives you more control over your emotions, thoughts, and behavior.

It gives you more insight into yourself and others by reducing reactivity and increasing capacity not just to keep working, but to have empathy, communication, and good relationships.




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# The Nervous System



A healthy nervous system has a calm baseline it returns to - where we operate optimally in our cognition, emotional regulation, physical performance and health.

We can tolerate the lows and acknowledge them as **temporary** and delight in the highs and acknowledge them, as **temporary** also.

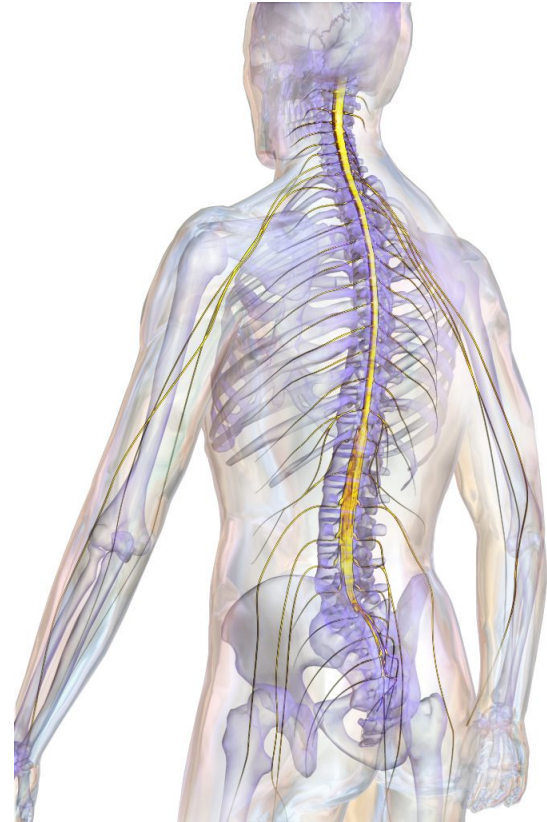
We respond **proportionately** to events and recover.

We can experience the entire range of human emotion - tolerate it - and return to baseline.



# Rules of Engagement

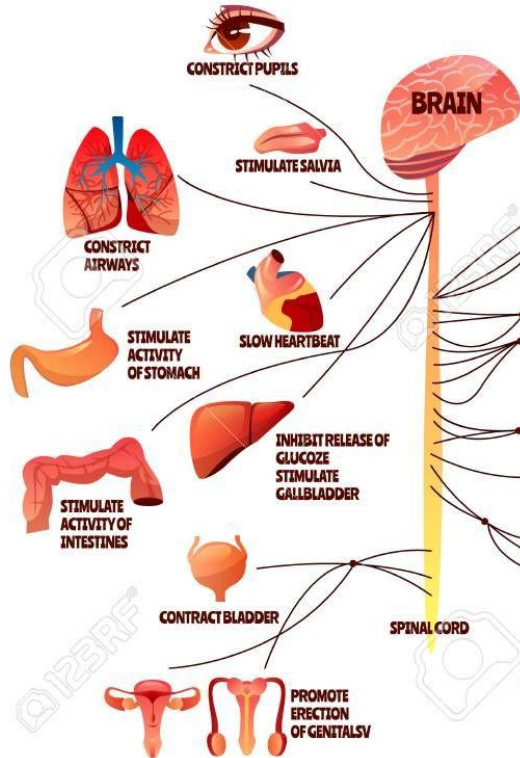
- mind and body connected in a continuous feedback loop
- It's first priority is survival, it gets all the information first.
- It's irrational and unconscious
- It is not governed by time or reality
- It responds to past, present, and future, memory and imagination, every thought, feeling, and word
- It responds to actual threat... as well as perceived threat
- It is contagious



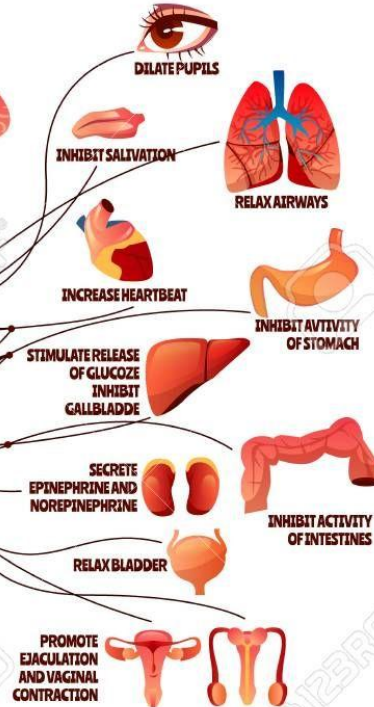


# HUMAN NERVOUS SYSTEM

## PARASYMPATHETIC NERVES



## SYMPATHETIC NERVES



A lioness is running towards the camera, chasing a zebra. The lioness is in the foreground, running on a dusty path. The zebra is running away from the camera, slightly to the right. The background is a savanna landscape with dry grass and some trees.

# Activation

**Action for survival or  
performance**



- Activation is anything that brings us out of baseline
- A response to threat or stress - a readiness to take action
- You know you're activated by the language of your nervous system - physical sensation: increase in respiration, heart rate, changes in vision, hearing, muscle tension, stomach upset, heat, sweating...

Demands on our lives now keep us stuck in non-survival based fight or flight and decrease our resiliency, compromising all we're working towards in the moment, and over time.

We white label this “anxiety” which is really fight or flight processes in the body and mind with no evolutionary outcome.



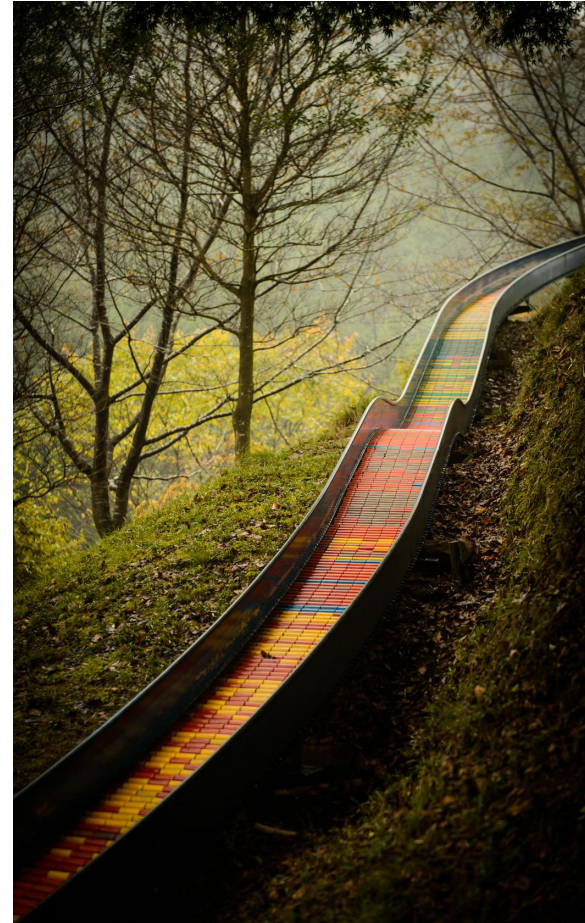




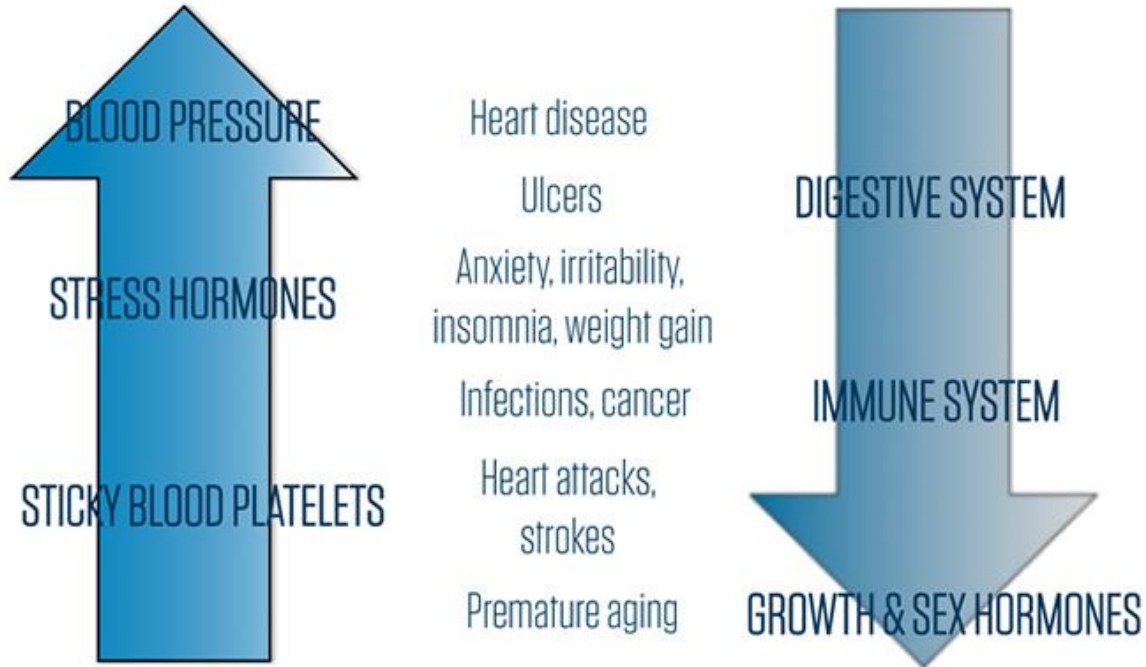
Rest and Digest  
→ Safety

# Regulation

- Initiates to bring the nervous system back to baseline once it senses we are safe
- Supports rest, digestion, recovery, healing
- How you know it's happening... slower heart rate, breathing normalizes, digestion returns, relaxation.
- If the process of returning to rest and recovery is interrupted or incomplete, as in chronic stress, we become depleted on an emotional, mental, and physical level.



# THE IMPACT OF CHRONIC FIGHT OR FLIGHT





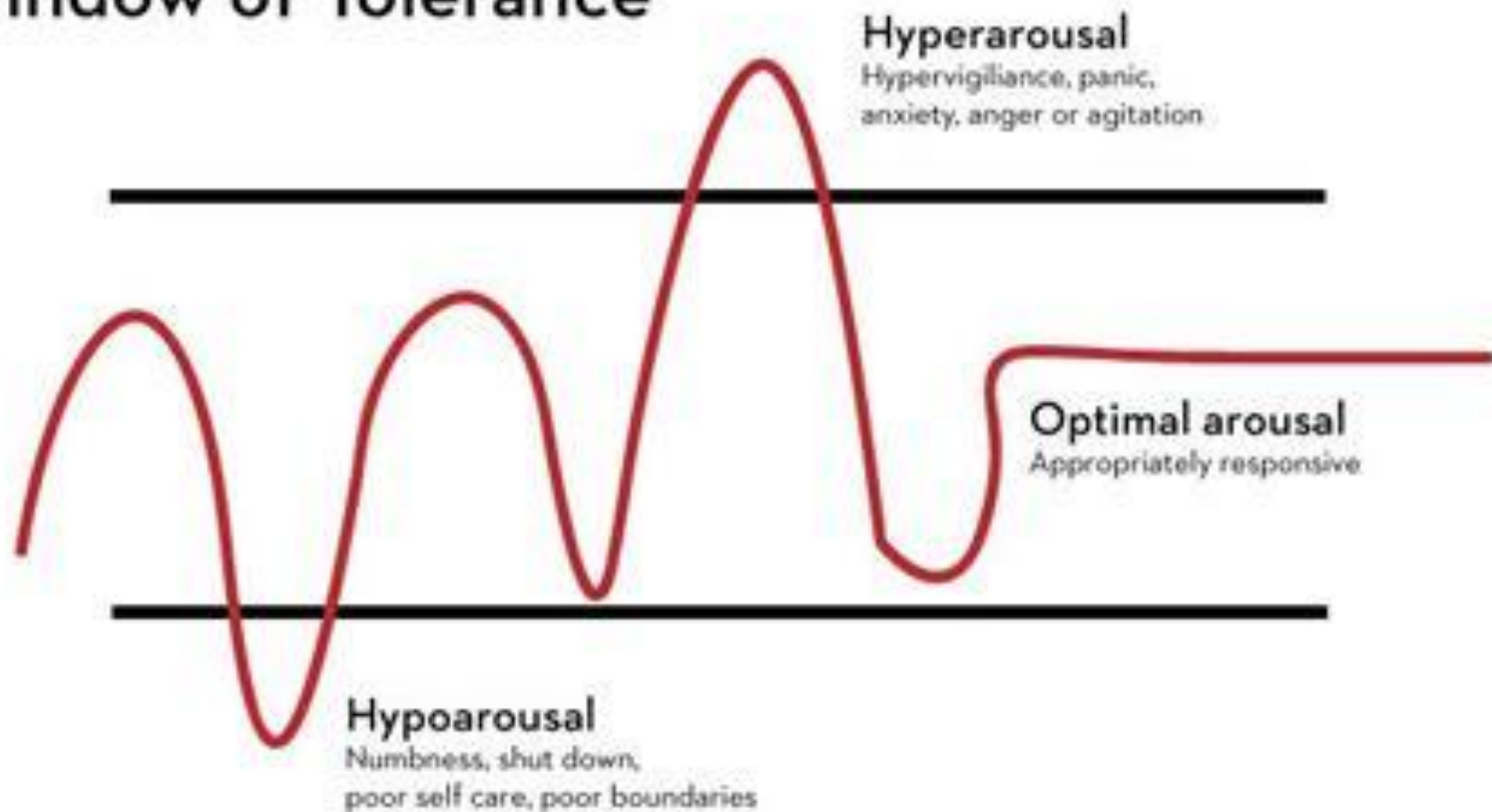
## A Healthy Nervous System...

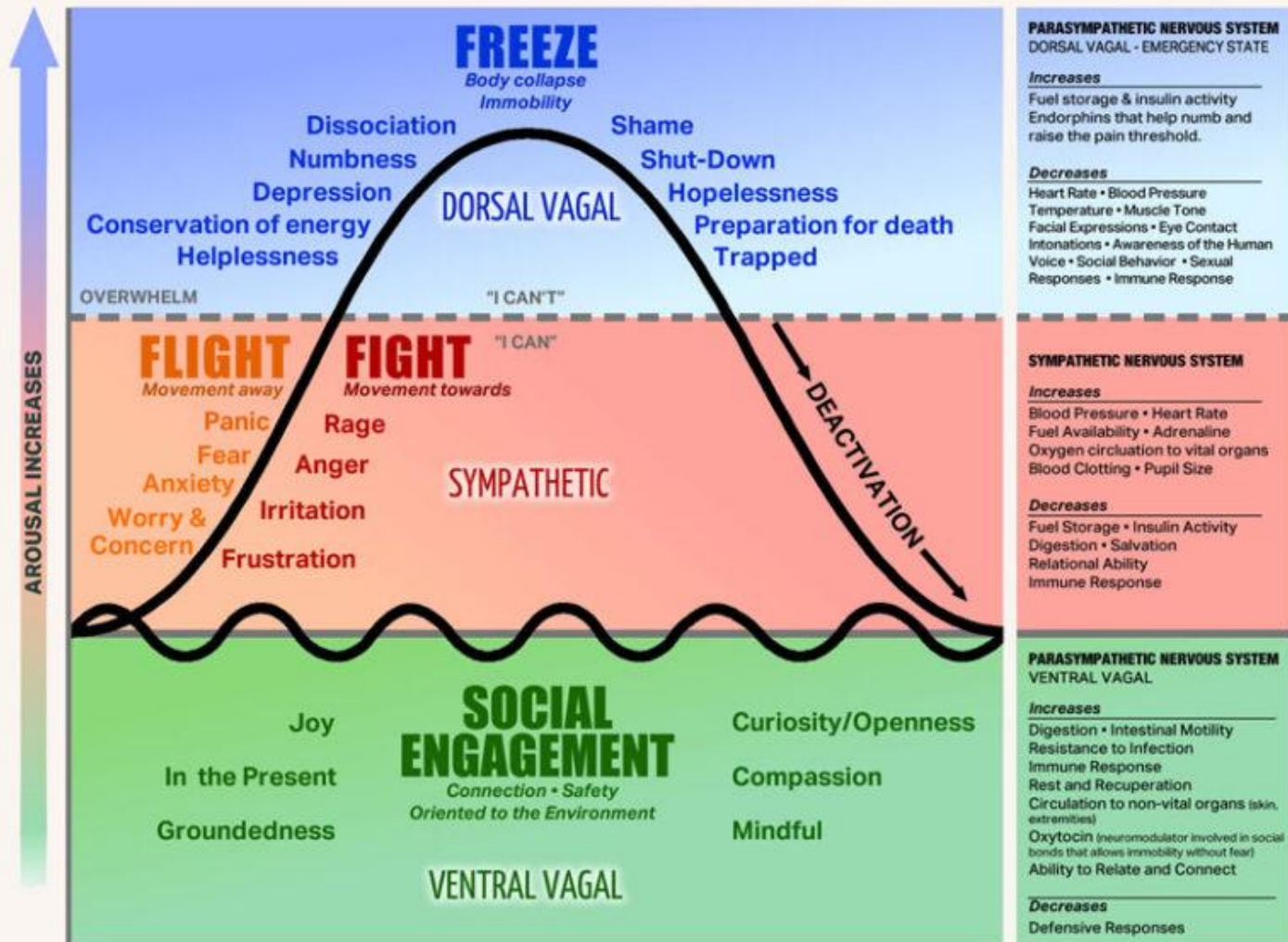



- The ability to flexibly discern between novelty and threat
- Can tolerate the lows and acknowledge them as **temporary** and delight in the highs and acknowledge them, as **temporary** also.
- Responds **proportionately** to events and recover



# Window of Tolerance





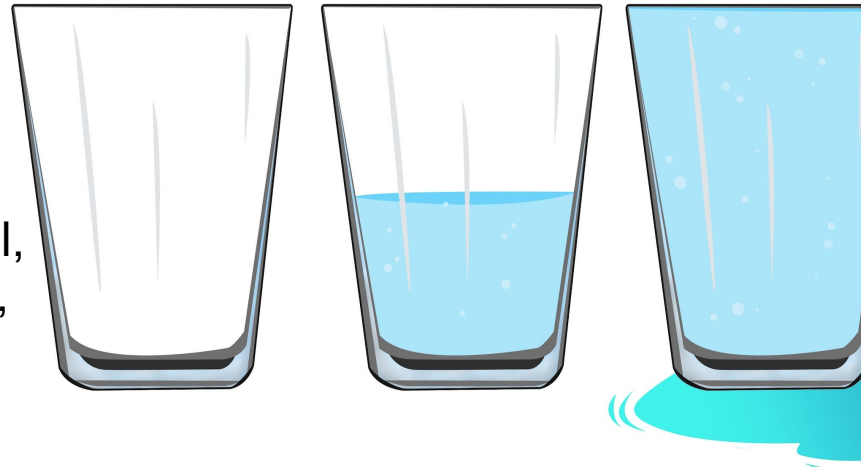
A low-angle photograph of a dense bamboo forest. The bamboo stalks are tall, slender, and green, reaching towards the sky. Sunlight filters through the dense canopy of green leaves at the top, creating a bright, dappled light effect. The perspective makes the stalks appear to converge towards the top center of the frame.

We are designed to be  
able to experience  
overwhelm, to respond,  
and to recover.

A Dysregulated nervous system...  
The inability to self regulate - a full container

Symptoms may include:

- insomnia, asthma, allergies, migraines, chronic pain, fatigue, GI issues TMJ, endocrine and hormone imbalance, frequent illness
- inability to feel calm, inability to feel joy, lack of humor, low energy, lack of focus, irritability
- impact on quality of life including withdrawal, shrinking & control unable to try new things, loss of creativity





# Start with baseline

Find your baseline and practice it regularly - this is the lilypad that you leap off from.

This is your calm, confident.

This is where you are the most resourced, the most resilient, and have the best opportunity for communication, creativity, health



# **Level 1: Find and practice your baseline**

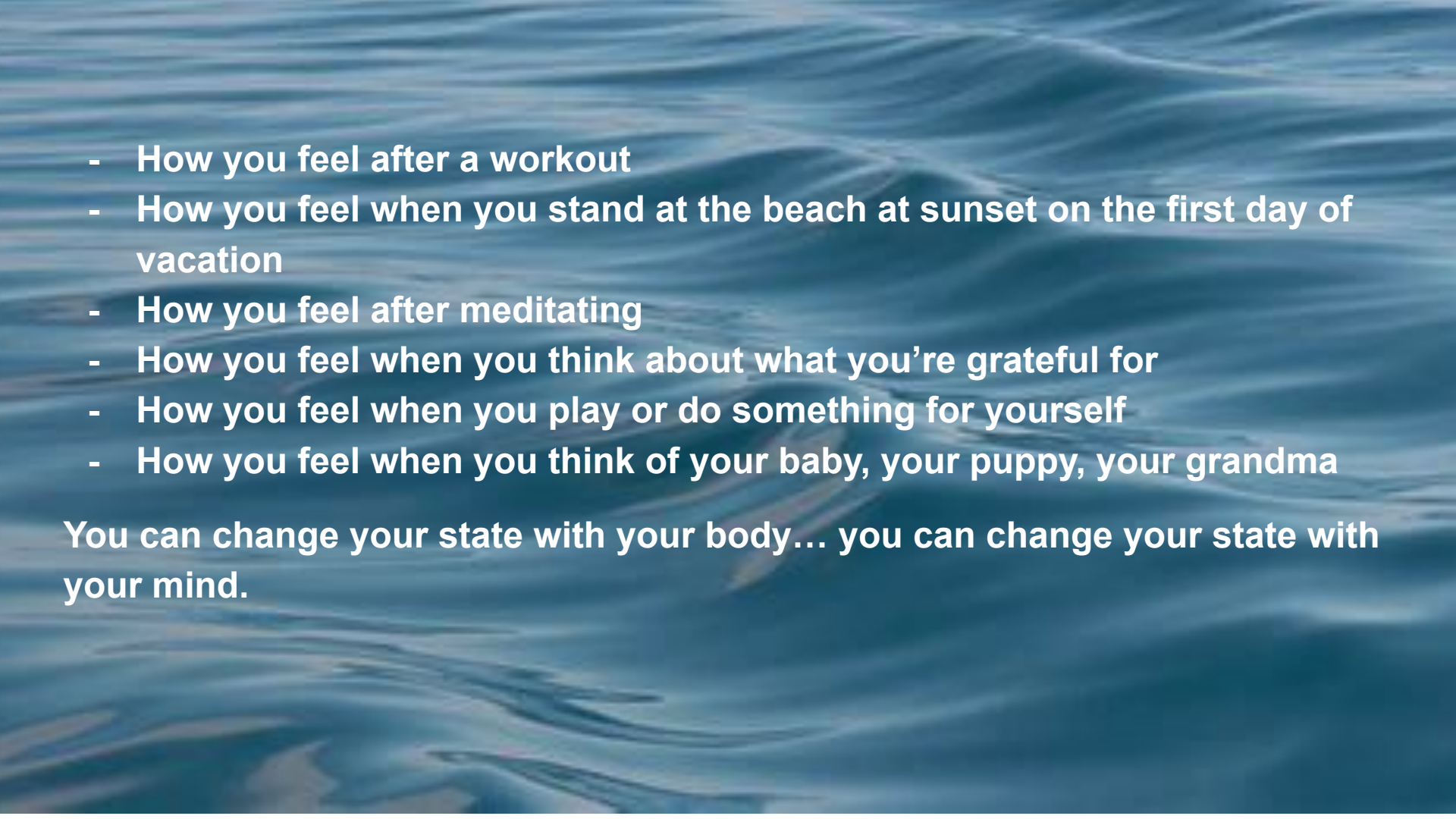
**Bring awareness to the physical sensations of being at baseline.**

**When do you feel your best?**

**When does your body feel most calm?**

**How do you notice it?**

**Creating an experience that you connect with physical sensation creates new neural pathways in the brain and fires and wires them tighter every time you practice it.**

- 
- How you feel after a workout
  - How you feel when you stand at the beach at sunset on the first day of vacation
  - How you feel after meditating
  - How you feel when you think about what you're grateful for
  - How you feel when you play or do something for yourself
  - How you feel when you think of your baby, your puppy, your grandma

**You can change your state with your body... you can change your state with your mind.**

## **Level 2: Calibrating your nervous system**

What state are you in right now?

What state do you need to be in?

What state are other people in?

When you set your baseline and start to move your own state up and down, you naturally start increasing awareness of other people and their state and can calibrate for best outcomes at work and at home.







## Tips for Time

Use the **past** (memory) only for searching for resources - positive memories, victories, confident moments

Use the **present** for gratitude and to integrate your baseline state.

Use the **future** (imagination) to write the story of your wins and self motivate.

You get the most from THIS MOMENT when you encourage the best state for the experience.

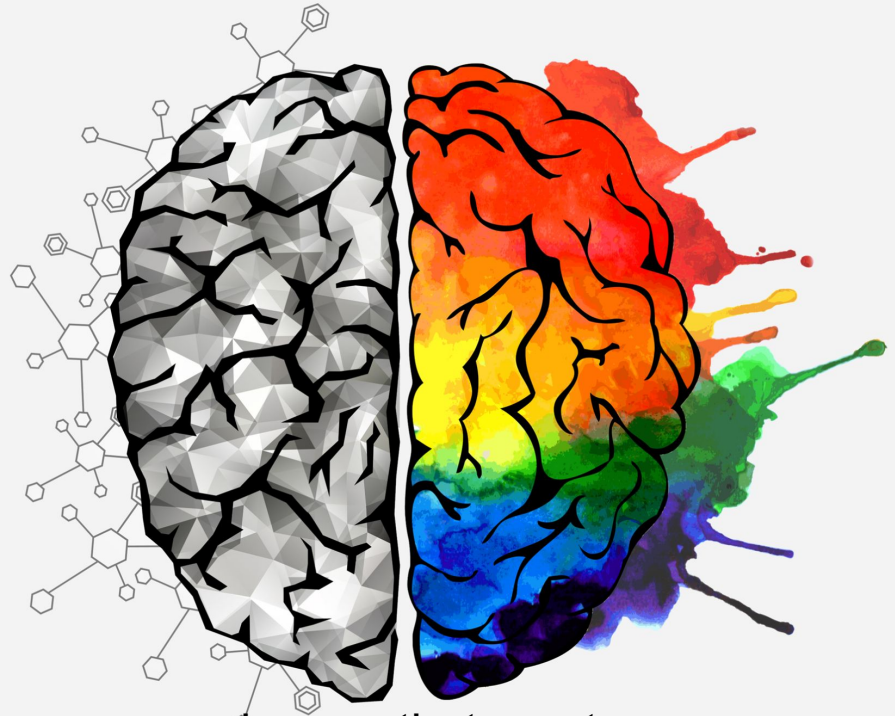
You aren't changing reality - you're changing your perception of it to support your nervous system.

# How the Brain Changes

1. Experience  
(Actual or Imaginary)
2. Repetition (Purposeful practice)
3. Challenge (Intentional Discomfort)

Connecting to physical sensation creates an experience - that creates a new neural pathway in the brain - that when repeated becomes a brain habit.

This is how you change your brain to become more of what and who you want.



How to stimulate up to peak performance...



# Choose an Alternate Reality

## *The Alter Ego*

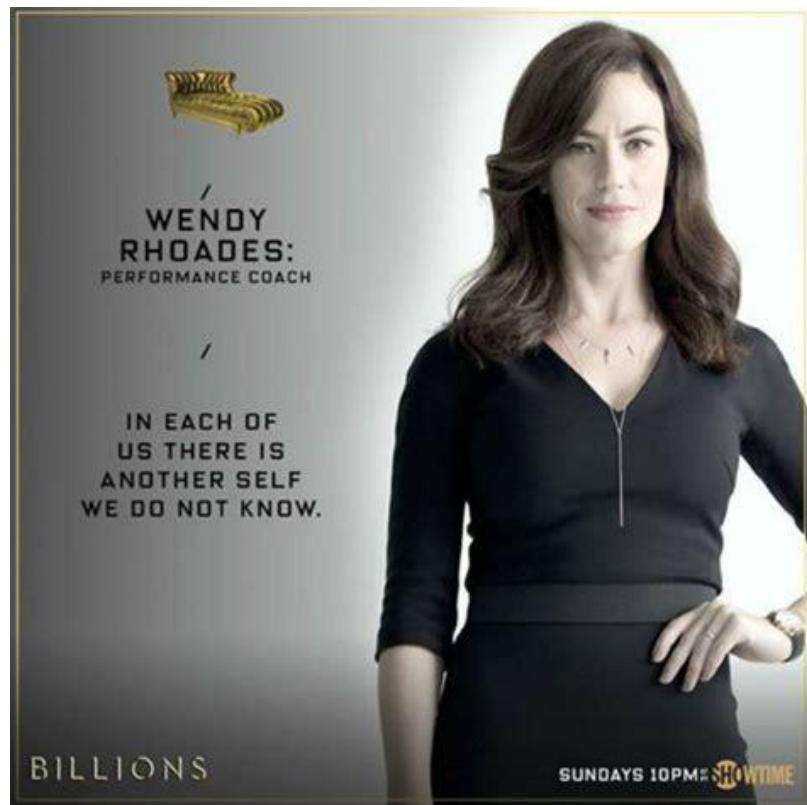
If you can't find the state, if you don't yet have the skills... mirror the state of someone or something else that does.

How would they do it, what energy would they come with, how would they reach the goal?

This allows you to borrow a state until it becomes part of your skillset.







# Supportive Practices

- Perspective (What's another way I can look at this)
- Humor and play
- Imagination (Instant self medication)
- Sleep,(the great regulator of the nervous system)
- Knowing what I need to calibrate and doing it (Awareness and dedication to self care from moment to moment)
- Celebration (history of victories, giving the brain something to look forward to)
- Being a beginner (new uncomfortable things)
- Nutrition, Exercise, Meditation/gratitude/mindfulness are non negotiable



“Working with Tara to regulate my nervous system prior to high stakes meetings, deals, presentations and pitches resulted in our company’s best revenue to date.

We get top line revenue by 23% and this was directly a result of my performance peaking in front of clients, partners, investors, and especially my own internal team.  
We are a 5MM+ company now because of this.

If you’re not working on your nervous system and biology to get a competitive edge in business, then you’re going to get beat by somebody else who is, no matter how smart or talented you think you are.

Your performance will only elevate to the level your nervous system allows, and Tara is the top professional in the world for regulating and leveling up the nervous system of leaders in business.”

Isaiah Hankel, PhD  
Founder, CEO, of Cheeky Scientist Enterprises

“I'm delighted to share my testimonial about the impact Tara had on our leadership team. Under her expert guidance, we experienced a transformative journey that propelled us toward greater success and harmony.

Tara's keen insights and discerning approach enabled us to identify team members who had untapped potential and areas for improvement. Through her guidance, we were able to nurture their development, fostering a culture of continuous growth, improvement, and capacities within our team. Her ability to provide constructive feedback was instrumental in challenging individuals to unlock their potential and focus on alignment.

Furthermore, Tara astutely recognized those team members who were most receptive to coaching, allowing them to be more effective. By focusing our coaching efforts on those who could benefit the most, we maximized the impact of our initiatives and witnessed substantial growth within our team.

One of her standout achievements was to skillfully identify and address the sources of tension that existed among different team members, creating an atmosphere of collaboration, trust, and mutual respect. This improved our team's ability to work together.

Overall, Tara's expertise and dedication to our team's success were impressive. She not only helped us identify and develop individual talents but also fostered an environment of trust that continues to help our team. I totally recommend Tara as a coach to help teams develop and work together.

Andy Beery, Founder and CEO, Acculevel





**Brain Coach**

Elite Performance Coaching

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